



Unit: Women

Lesson 3.1: *You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer!* by Shana Corey (Scholastic, 2000)

Aim: To learn about women's clothing in the 19th century as well as one prominent feminist of the time.

Objective: Students learn about women's dress of the period from the picture book read-aloud *You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer!*

Materials:

1. *You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer!* by Shana Corey (Scholastic, 2000)
2. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* editorial, "The Dress Question," June 14, 1866, p. 2 (proficient readers only) <http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/civilwar/cwdoc088.html>
3. Optional: Photograph of a woman and soldiers at camp
<http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/civilwar/cwdoc061.html>

Procedure:

1. Introduce subject by asking students to think about how fashion has changed in their lifetimes. Questions to ask: Do you or your relatives have any clothes that are no longer in style? Describe them. Does the school have a dress code? What is it? Do you own any clothes that you can't wear to school because of the code? Do you think it is fair for schools to have dress codes?
2. Tell class they are about to hear a picture book about the life and times of Amelia Bloomer. Show students the cover and ask them to make observations and predictions about the story.
3. After reading the book, ask students to provide adjectives and details from the story about women's dress of the time.
4. How and why did Bloomer change women's dress and how did people react to these changes?
5. Are there any styles today that your parents disapprove of? Do you agree? Would you wear them? Would you object to other people wearing them?
6. Stage a mock debate between Bloomer and a "proper lady" arguing for and against the new style.

7. Proficient readers can read the editorial from the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, “The Dress Question.” What is the writer’s opinion of the women’s dress reform movement? Find one or two quotes to support your answer. What is the writer’s opinion of Mrs. Dr. Mary Walker? Again, find some quotes to support your answer. Do you agree or disagree with the editorial?
8. Students can write their own editorials on either women’s dress reform in the mid-19th century or a contemporary fashion controversy.